

# Are your deadstock piles and disposal costs causing your farm nightmares?

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Halloween will soon arrive, and your livestock mortality pile should not be the scariest thing around. "Greasy, Grimy, Gopher Guts!!!" Is that

what you think of when you need to compost livestock mortality? If you are afraid to open the piles and spread them, you may be doing something wrong and need a few tips or adjustments.

When large and small animals die on a farm, a farmer has only a few options for handling their remains. A farmer may choose to use a rendering service to remove deadstock, however this service may be unavailable or

cost prohibitive. Farmers may also choose to bury animals but that takes time, equipment and cooperative weather conditions. It also puts the carcass 6 feet closer to groundwater. In some states burial has been limited to specific situations or outlawed altogether. Leaving mortality open to the elements to jeopardize the health of domestic livestock, wildlife and pets can affect farm biosecurity.

Barring the previous options leaves composting. When done properly, composting mortality greatly reduces pathogens and is relatively odor free. Animals of all sizes can be composted year round at a low cost to the farmer. Nutrient management and CAFO plans require farms to account for the disposal of their dead stock. Proper composting can help meet those requirements in a relatively economical manner.

## The Cost of Mortality Disposal

### Mortality Composting - Burying Cow

Backhoe operating cost	\$45.00
Labor	\$15.00
0.6 gallons of fuel @\$4.15 per gallon	\$2.49
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$62.49</b>

### Composting with Wood Chips

5 Cubic Yards Chips @\$5.00 per yard	\$25.00
Labor	\$7.50
0.4 gallons of fuel @\$4.15 per gallon	\$1.66
Tractor operating cost	\$17.50
<b>Total Cost</b>	<b>\$51.66</b>

The location for composting mortality should be carefully thought out. The site should have a 1-2 percent slope, be well drained, be at least 200 ft. from any watercourse, seasonal or non-seasonal and be convenient. Properly composted carcasses will not have much run-off but any run-off generated should be directed through a grass filter strip. The plants in the grass filter strip serve to take up nutrients that would otherwise run off. Without a filter strip excess nutrients could cause a pollution problem.

**Proper Compost Methods:**

• First, make a 24-inch deep layer of bulky absorbent material, such as municipal wood chips, making sure the layer allows for 2 feet of clearance around the carcass.

• Second, lay the carcass in the center of the pile or windrow, making sure to lance the rumen to avoid bloating and possible explosion.

• Third, cover the carcass with 2 feet of woodchips, bedded pack, or old silage. It is important to use chunky carbon sources; if material is too dense the process will shut down.

**Deadstock B22**

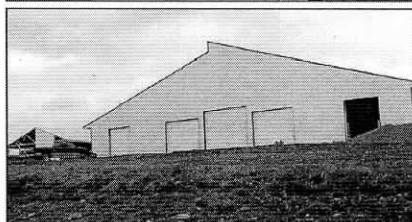
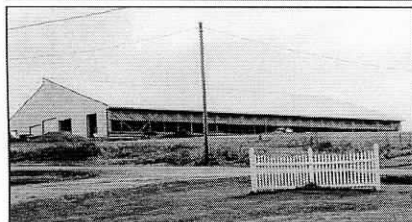
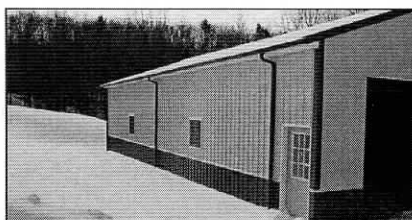
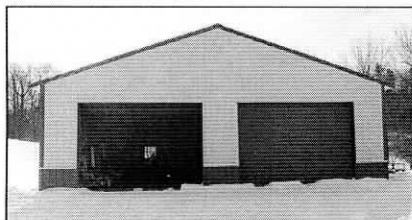
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**Partial Listing:** Farm Equipment will sell first at 10:00 AM - Fiat Allis 605B Payloader (articulating) w/extra bucket, Ford 7710 diesel tractor, Landtrac 530 DTC 4WD tractor, 2 Ford 600 Rev. forklift tractors (Sherman lifts), 1979 International 26' flatbed truck, Myers speed sprayer, Girette 3pt basket pruner, Woods 12' rotary mower, John Deere 12' trans. disk, John Deere trans. drag, McConnell 3pt cultivators, New Idea sickle bar mower, front snow blade, Ford 3pt rear forks, 3pt posthole digger, 3pt trencher/subsoiler, 3pt 4 row planter, 2 fertilizer spreaders, John Deere LT180 garden tractor, Yard Pro 18HP garden tractor, Lincoln 225 amp welder, set of torches, drill press, 2 piece toolbox unit, shop air compressor, Allstate battery charger, bench vice, Ariens rototiller, lawn roller, 2 wheel dump cart, sand blaster, several pruning shears, tractor weights, power tools, hand tools, and the barns are still full! **Antique & Household:** Beautiful 5 piece cherry bedroom set (like new), oak china cabinet double door leaded glass, Victorian marble top stand, chestnut twisted leg table, oak tea cart, 9 piece mahogany dining room set, mahogany 1 drawer glass cabinet, oak deacons bench, sofa, pair Baize recliners, quilt rack, large Sony color TV, misc. rugs, trunks, church pew, old bicycle, wooden & iron wheels, crocks, sleds, hand cultivators, cabbage seeders, platform scales, lg. beveled glass gilted mirror, Gone w/Wind lamp, carnival glass, depression glass, green satin bowl, opalescent, cookware, silverware, stemware & MORE! Refrigerator, 20' gas propane stove, Frigidaire chest freezer, Gibson freezer and much more, too numerous to list!

**Auction Note:** Farm Equipment will sell at 10:00 AM Sharp! Lots of nice clean items offered at this auction.

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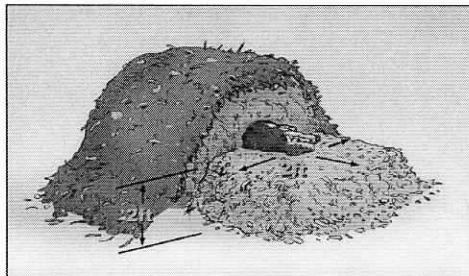
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**Deadstock** from B21  
**RIGHT** — This graphic shows how a mortality compost pile should be constructed.

Temperatures should range between 120-150 degrees F within 24 hours. Composting large animals typically takes from 4 to 6 months. With the seasonality of the northeast it is best to leave piles for 6 to 12 months as there will be good pathogen reduction and the material will be further processed. The composting process is the opposite of the silage process, in making silage the air is pressed out of the pile. In composting the more air you incorporate the faster and more complete the process, with the silage process the less air the better. The compost should be left alone until the carcass is fully decomposed; no turning or agitation is needed. The composted material can be reused as the base to compost another carcass or land applied after removing the large bones. Remember to

**Deadstock** B23

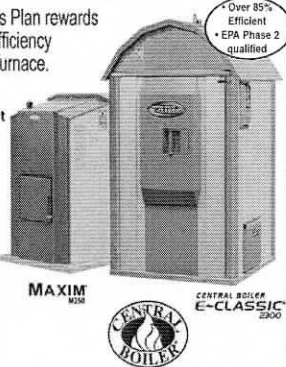


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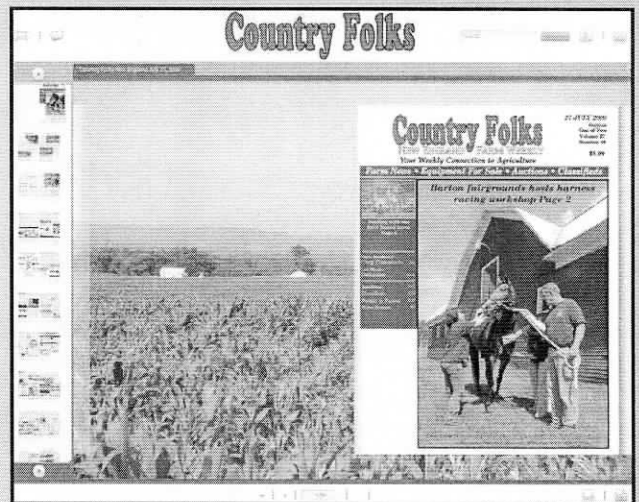


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